

Welcome Nye's Fourth

His mother was one of those married old maids who abound even in the best society. He was the child of her middle age; and because she resented his coming, as a check upon her social gaieties, she had compromised with her Puritanical conscience by calling him Welcome, after the colonial ancestor of her mother.

So, as Welcome Nye, he was sent forth to create disturbance in the world; which he did in inverse ratio to his size and vitality.

His mother did not long survive his birth, and he was left, the incarnation

twins had married; and Lella—his Lella—was eeked a youthful grandmother!

He paced the gravel path in the moonlight, while the odor of his cigar mingled with the fragrance from the tangle of old-fashioned cinnamon roses by the gate; and memory went back to the time when they had bidden each other farewell—an affectionate farewell, he remembered, as his cheek reddened, he to return to college, the girl to go to a showy finishing school abroad, where her ambitious mother had married her to some beefy Englishman whom Adelbert had always hated on principle.

"And she is 10,000 times more fascinating now than she was then! That sweet September day when we gathered the gentians by the pasture ditch—gentians no bluer than her own dear eyes!" he murmured, with a strange accession of sentimentality. "Ah! after all, age is but a relative term! And the fountain of perpetual youth is not so fabled as one might dream! Yet lovely as Lella is, she is no whit lovelier than is that sweet child, her daughter, the pretty Louise! How fortunate that chance should have made us neighbors!"

Meantime, in the seclusion of her own bed chamber, Lella Carleton was standing before the mirror, removing the jewels which had flashed upon the dimy faces of her handsome dinner gown.

"Oh, who would ever, ever expect a man to be faithful?" she asked herself, with bitterness, forgetting that she, too, had been somewhat inconstant during the long lapse of years.

As the days went on, it was a sweet consolation to Adelbert Nye to have the sympathy of such a neighbor in his affliction—for so he regarded the possession of such a son, in spite of his effort to love the uncanny child and his care and solicitude for the boy's physical welfare. Lella understood, and had pity for him. But it was a source of regret that the child had conceived an instant antipathy toward the beautiful Louise, who found a rare pleasure in teasing the boy, amazing the young tyrant by declaring that what he needed for both physical and mental health was an unlimited dose of Solomon's prescription. To Welcome, who had never been thwarted or disciplined during his capricious life, this was the signal for hatred of the most malevolent sort; and the two waged warfare as persistent as it was

lover of her girlhood to remain the lover of her middle age?

So the late June days fled; and as the nation's birthday approached, the early cottagers at the Pier joined with the townspeople in preparations to celebrate the day with fitting evidences of patriotism. There was to be an early morning parade of antiquies and horrors, followed by a military demonstration, a parade of automobiles at noon and an old-fashioned afternoon picnic, with reading of the Declaration and patriotic addresses, ending with an evening of fireworks.

Such a busy season as it became for Welcome Nye!

His father was to lead the automobile parade in his fine French racing machine and deep was Welcome's disgust and violent his ire when refused the privilege of accompanying him, more especially since that honor was to be accorded his arch-enemy, Louise Carleton.

The choice was seemly and fitting; yet it caused Louise Carleton's mother a little pang which she would not admit was jealousy, and which she heroically strove to ignore, as she aided her daughter in decorating the Corsair, which, in its floral lines of red and white carnations and the blue of the feathery adjutant, with knots and festoons of fluttering ribbons in the national colors was a thing of beauty, when their deft fingers had given it the finishing touches.

To the surprise of the townspeople, Independence Day dawned bright and warm, an ideal day for the celebration.

The events of the morning proved more than successful and there was lively interest in the coming of the autos, which were to make the round of the town at noon.

The Corsair, looking like a fairy vehicle in its floral adornment, stood in the open doorway of the Nye stables, only waiting the coming of its owner to start upon its triumphal progress. The household was busily engaged, for it was the lunch hour; all were anticipating the rare pleasure of the afternoon.

Suddenly there was a dash, a bang, a warning toot! toot! the odor and puff of gasoline, and out of the stable doorway and down the drive madly dashed a cumbersome floral bulk.

There was a cry of alarm, a rush from stable and household, hoarse warnings hurled after an adventurous and unheeding chauffeur.

"The divvie! He's run away with



"The divvie! He's run away with the auto!"

regrettably to their elders.

It was natural that the sedate and dignified Lawyer Nye should find it both pleasant and convenient to be neighborly, and that he should make calls both frequent and regular at the Carleton villa.

Particularly distasteful to one youth was the gallantry of Neighbor Nye; to the bank clerk with small salary, who devotedly came down from Boston each Saturday, to pay court to Louise, and whose heart sank at the sight of the solid and wealthy director of his own banking house, whom he found comfortably at home with the girl, in the easy chat of an informal afternoon upon the shady veranda, a state of bliss which he had been picturing for himself all the way down in the crowded, dusty train.

He did not appear well, this disappointed Archie Irwin, as he was presented to the dignified caller, whom he regarded with sudden hatred and dismay. What chance had he, he asked himself bitterly, against a man with Nye's money, and profession and position? Worst of all, Louise seemed pleased with the attentions of the middle-aged suitor.

The young man—he was tall and athletic, and good to look upon, an Adonis of the Von Bibber type—fell back upon Welcome for entertainment during his doleful visits to the villa. The weird child had taken to him from the first, clinging to him with passionate affection, watching his every movement with the dumb devotion of an animal.

Another watched the growing interest of Adelbert Nye in the fair young girl, and tried in vain to ignore the heart-burnings which it caused.

And yet, why? Lella Carleton asked herself. Why should she expect the

the auto!" one groom called to another, and that one to the house servants.

In truth it might have been his satanic majesty himself, the way that elfish child dashed down the drive and into the street.

The anxious group followed him in mad haste, but not for long.

They held their breath in horror as they saw the machine zig zag, then essay to climb the grassy terrace at the Carleton villa, ingloriously dropping back; and then, puffing and snorting, with whirling of wheels, dash backward across the road and over the offset, down upon the rough cobble of the beach.

The child lay very still as they rescued him, seeming to take his mishap as a matter of course.

When they picked him up his left arm hung limp and there were sundry smudges and burned places upon his face; for the Corsair had taken fire, and was no longer the dainty floral thing which it had been left as the triumph of womanly artistry.

"Any other child would have been killed!" was the verdict of the physician who had been summoned in hot haste—a familiar verdict enough to all who knew Welcome Nye and his escapades.

It was Archie Irwin who had tenderly lifted the little figure from under the wrecked machine, and to whom the child had clung with passionate affection; but after they had taken him to the veranda of the villa he had suddenly stretched out his uninjured arm to Mrs. Carleton, and had begun to sob and cry in a paroxysm which amazed them all, since repentance and Welcome were wont to be as bitter strangers.

Lella Carleton tenderly folded the

hapless child in her arms, his besmudged face and tousled head nestling against the dainty whiteness of her gown, as she endeavored to soothe him, and to still the strange outburst which was so distressing and so disconcerting to his unhappy father.

Could it be that the sullen, malevolent nature had capacity for feeling of which he had never dreamed? Or, was this but a physical manifestation of nervousness and terror?

"My boy! My boy!" he began, soothingly. "Be quiet! The doctor is going to set your shoulder. Surely, you do not mind a little thing like that?" he asked, recalling the child's lifetime of accidents.

Welcome ceased his cries for an instant and then renewed them.

"Oh, I have been a bad, bad boy!" he whimpered, with astonishing penitence. "But I'm never, never going to be bad any more!"

"That is a laudable resolution, my son!" his father responded with mild irony. "Pity you did not think to make it earlier!" and he glanced grimly at the wrecked automobile, and thought of his spoiled plans.

"I'm never going to be bad—if you give me something!" whimpered the boy again.

"My son! I forbear to mention what I'd give you with huge delight, if I gave you your deserts!" exclaimed the sorely tried father; while Mrs. Carleton smiled.

"I'll be good," the child astonished them by declaring, "if only I get a new mamma!"

Their eyes met in confusion.

"I'm the only boy 'round here that ain't got no mamma," announced the child, with cheerful impudence and disregard of grammar, "and I want one!" he persisted. "I want Mrs. Carleton!"

"My boy, this is the first good turn you have done your unfortunate father since your birth!" blurted out Adelbert Nye, with surprising alacrity. "You have but anticipated my own request!" and he smiled upon the boy most genially. "Now if only Mrs. Carleton consents—"

"But I thought—" that lady began, in confusion.

"Oh, I want you! I want you!" the elfin child persisted, tightening his arm desperately about her neck. "I'll be a good boy! I truly will!"

The doctor was arranging his splints at the end of the veranda. Archie and Louise had joined the curious group on the opposite side of the street.

It was an opportunity afforded them by Fate!

"Lella," the dignified barrister began in a tender whisper, "the child has but voiced my own thoughts! You know what you were to me once! For your dear sake I have learned to love your daughter as my own. She cares for young Irwin; I am in a way to help the boy along. For all our sakes, then, will you not consent?"

"It seems but fair," she responded slowly and calmly, although she felt that he must be aware of the mad beating of her heart, "to exchange my daughter for your son!"

"Lella, I know it is a long time since that far-off September day when we gathered the gentians in the old pasture lot, and vowed—"

"All ready now, young man!" broke in the doctor's cheery voice, as he hurried fustily up with full hands. "Now let's see what a hero you're going to be!"

But the child pushed him rudely away, at the same time inquiring, in the imperious tone of one who had never known what it was to have his wishes gainsaid:

"Is it all right, papa?"

"That is for Mrs. Carleton to decide, my son! Is it all right, Mrs. Carleton?" he inquired lightly, yet with unmistakable anxiety in his tone.

Two little spots of red burned upon her cheeks, and she hesitated.

Surely, never was so strange a proposal!

"You are going to be my—"



The hapless child in her arms.

child began; but she pressed him to her, smothering the word which she wished to hide from the waiting surgeon.

And then she sobbed, and in a minute she smiled pathetically.

"For once my son's escapades have accorded with his outlandish name!" was Adelbert Nye's fervent comment.

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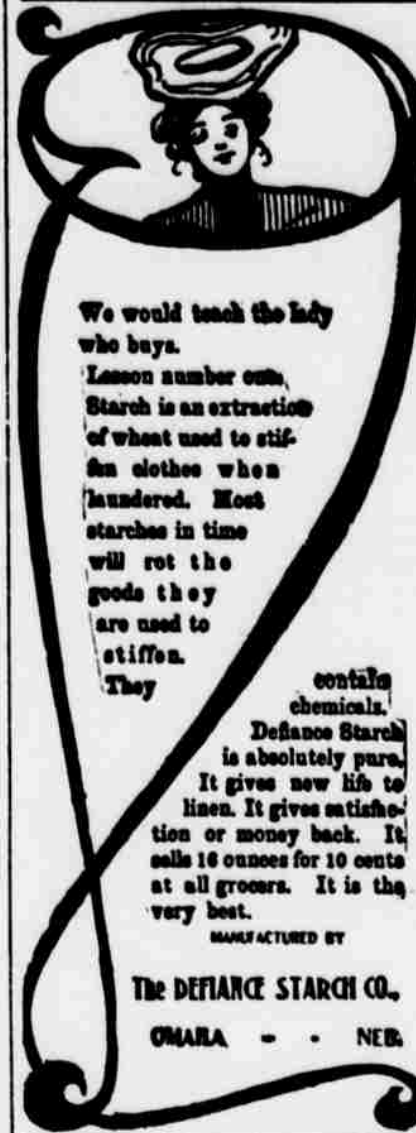
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Panama Canal Laborers.

At present there are employed on the Panama canal construction 1,500 laborers and foremen, forty-five physicians and 160 civil engineers. They were employed by the canal company, but are being paid by the United States. The daily expense of the construction amounts to about \$5,000.

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"My son," said the Savage Bachelor, "beware of the pretty girl at a summer hotel who is always late for her meals, who keeps every one waiting on all excursions, and has no idea of time—it is this kind of which the wives are made who drive men to drink."

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